

billion has been used inappropriately of Iraqi reconstruction funds that we appropriated. It is unaccounted for, according to the Inspector General in Iraq. There are 50 investigations going on. A Halliburton subsidiary just acknowledged, admitted, that they overcharged the government by \$63 million for a contract.

We need a Truman Committee-type investigation. It saved the American taxpayer tens of billions of dollars in the 1940's. It was rejected in the full committee, but it should be made part of this bill.

Now another major part of this bill deals with Hurricane Katrina. I was just down there in Louisiana, Mr. Chairman, on my own tab, for what it is worth what I learned about the contracting process down there is just stunning. It makes you wonder whether we should be providing any money unless we can get a handle over the way the money is spent.

Let me give you a thinly-veiled hypothetical example. One contract, for example, we give it to a prime contractor to fix roofs for \$25,000 a roof. Eighty percent of it goes to a subcontractor, then 60 percent to another subcontractor, to another subcontractor, and, finally, it gets down to a company that actually puts the roof on for \$1,200 a roof. You do the math, Mr. Chairman. Virtually all of the money goes to these contractors who never banged a hammer on a nail, and you know how we found out about it? Because the actual undocumented aliens who did the work contacted a FEMA person on the field, wondering how they were going to get paid. You go figure, Mr. Chairman.

Another contract went for debris removal, prime contractor, subcontractor, down again through reiterations, finally goes to the company that is already doing the very work for the City of New Orleans for a fraction of the cost but they never saw 90 percent of the money. These are things a Truman Committee could look into and fix.

Beyond the need for more oversight on the contracting process of the Federal Government, Mr. Chairman, we have some other issues that should have been part of this bill. The members of the full committee in the last omnibus appropriations conference had put the bill to bed, finished it up, when the majority leader of the Senate came over and added 45 pages providing liability exemption for drug companies.

□ 1245

We wanted to rectify that by striking the language we never approved. That was not done.

The third issue that we debated in full committee, and unfortunately it lost, was to give Medicare recipients an extra 7 months within which to make a decision as to whether to participate in Medicare part D. If Medicare senior citizens don't sign up by May 15, they have to then wait for another 7 months

and they will pay an extra 1 percent a month. That means there will be a tax, if you will, a penalty of 7 percent for the rest of their lives applied to their insurance premiums.

It is too confusing a program. They need more time to decide. We ought to give them another 7-month extension so that they can make that decision by the end of this calendar year. If we don't ten million seniors will pay this penalty for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Chairman, there are so many other issues in this bill that we could discuss. Some of them will be discussed. But the bottom line is that it is an awful lot of money. It is the largest supplemental we have ever passed in this body. The largest appropriation as a supplemental ever considered. We have to provide it, but we ought to show more scrutiny towards the way the money is being spent.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, there is a provision here with regard to Dubai Ports World attempted purchase of American ports. I know I am in the distinct minority. It was a 62-2 vote, and I was one of the two that opposed this language. We have to identify our friends, and Dubai is our friend. The fact is that the Homeland Security Secretary said if this deal goes through it will strengthen port security, yet we ignore that information as well as the reality of the fact that Dubai is doing everything to be a bridge to the moderate Arab world. We blew up that bridge in committee, as far as I am concerned, Mr. Chairman, and I would hope we will try to rectify some of that damage.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) having assumed the chair, Mr. GILLMOR, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4939) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair desires to make an announcement.

After consultation with the Speaker, the majority and minority leaders, the Chair announces that during the joint meeting to hear an address by her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those on his right and left will be open.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House.

Due to the large attendance which is anticipated, the Chair feels the rule re-

garding the privilege of the floor must be strictly adhered to.

Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor, and the cooperation of all Members is requested. The practice of reserving seats prior to the joint meeting by placard will not be allowed. Members may reserve their seats by physical presence only following the security sweep of the Chamber.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, March 9, 2006, the House stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 49 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

During the recess, beginning at about 1:50 p.m. the following proceedings were had:

□ 1350

#### JOINT MEETING OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE TO HEAR AN ADDRESS BY HER EXCELLENCY ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

The Speaker of the House presided.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms, Bill Sims, announced the Vice President and Members of the U.S. Senate who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the Vice President taking the chair at the right of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the President of the Republic of Liberia, into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER);

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM);

The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN);

The gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY);

The gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH);

The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN);

The gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE);

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH);

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON);

The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE);

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI);

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN);

The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS);

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE);

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS);